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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews principal effectiveness research and suggests measures that might promote effective principalship. The first section discusses principals' behavior patterns and conditions bearing on their effectiveness. Topics examined include role ambiguity, goal setting behavior, leadership and initiative, management behaviors, instructional management, symbolic leadership, personal characteristics, leadership styles, and situational influences. The second section proposes that states and school districts facilitate principals effectiveness by (1) giving principals a greater role in educational improvement programs; (2) selecting principals according to precise and explicit competencies while recognizing the symbolic importance of selection, using behavioral measures derived from such programs as internships and assessment centers, and matching principals to schools; (3) providing more relevant preservice and inservice training; and (4) improving school districts' organization and management by articulating districtwide goals while preserving school autonomy, and by developing comprehensive evaluation systems. Incentive programs are proposed as one means of supporting effective principals. (MCG)

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# Improving Conditions for Principal Effectiveness:

## Policy Implications of Research on Effective Principals

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## IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS

From the education community to the world of scholarly research to the popular press, the last few years have seen a resurgence of attention to the importance of principals for effective schools. Recently the Wall Street Journal (February 23, 1983) featured a front page story on Baltimore principals. Newsweek responded to the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education with a cover story stressing the principal's role in raising the expectation level of teachers and students (May 9, 1983, p. 53). In 1981 the Harvard Graduate School of Education established a Principal's Center. The 1983 meeting of the American Educational Research Association featured 25 sessions on principals, up from 3 in 1978.

States are moving toward competency based certification requirements for principals and statewide administrator training academies. The Florida legislature has established and funded a Council on Educational Management, with a mandate that includes identifying "...those competencies which characterize high-performing principals..." validating those competencies through research, and developing training, certification, selection, and compensation procedures that recognize and support those competencies (Florida H.B. 1104). Local districts are looking at assessment centers and behavioral approaches to principal selection, or to locally designed training and internship programs.

The attention from the public, policymakers and the education practice community is matched by a growing body of research on principals' behavior and school effectiveness. The purpose of this paper is to begin to make some connections between this accumulating research on effective principals and its implications for state and local policy. How can we use the research to

improve the training and selection of principals, and to support the kind of principal leadership behaviors that we find in effective schools?

Cautionary Notes

In negotiating the path from research to policy or from research to practice, there are numerous cautions to be invoked along the way. Much of the research has been at the elementary level; care is necessary in applying the findings to larger and more complex secondary schools. There are multiple methodological problems involving sample selection and research design. Most of the studies are cross sectional and correlational. They look at a particular school at a particular point in time, but they lack the methodological rigor to support statements of causality.

Furthermore, the complexity of both the multiple roles of principals and of schools as organizations force certain design decisions on researchers, often resulting in a focus on only some of the dimensions of the principal's role, or some parts of the organization. These design decisions may affect the findings. We are likely to find what we are looking for because we know where and how to look for it. But in the questions we fail to ask or the places we fail to look, we may neglect other possible explanations or equally important factors.

The question of measures of either school effectiveness or principal effectiveness is a complex one. In their excellent discussion of methodological issues in studying effective schools, Rowan, Bossert and Dwyer (April 1983) say:

> Past research has defined school effectiveness narrowly as instructional effectiveness and has measured this construct using standardized achievement tests. This approach ignores the variety of school goals and yields measures of school effectiveness that are invalid and unreliable.

The question of principal effectiveness is even more complex than that of school effectiveness, for the scientific community has yet to develop either the theory or the research methodology to trace the impact of managerial actions on organizational productivity. In the case of schools, a multitude of other factors intervene between the actions of the principal and any measures of school effectiveness.

Yet despite methodological problems, the cumulative research is beginning to demonstrate some recurring patterns that may have important policy implications. For the first time, we have solid descriptive data on what principals really do on a day-to-day basis, and we can use this knowledge to design training programs and to screen applicants. All of the factors consistently identified as characteristic of effective schools - strong administrative leadership, a school climate conducive to learning, a schoolwide emphasis on basic skills, high teacher expectations for student achievement, and systematic monitoring of pupil performance - are either directly or indirectly related to the effectiveness of principals. And while much of the effective schools research discusses principals in rather general terms, several recent studies have looked specifically at principals' behavior. These studies have begun to identify characteristics that seem to distinguish between more and less effective principals, linking behavior to some measure of results.

We turn, then, to a review of the most important of these findings, beginning with the descriptive work on principals' behavior, and moving to a more focused discussion of emerging findings on effective principals. Then, using this data plus the small body of applied research on principal selection and training, we trace potential policy implications in the areas of program

implementation, principal selection, pre-service and in-service training, and district level organization and management issues.[1]

Principal Behavior

What do principals do? How do they spend their days and handle the myriad of competing demands on their time? Several recent studies have, for the first time, provided detailed descriptions of principals' work. A number of these (Berman 1981; Martin & Willower 1981; Willower & Kmetz 1982) have adapted the methodology and categories developed by Henry Mintzberg in his studies of business executives (Mintzberg 1973). While there are some limitations to the method and the conception of managerial work on which it is based, the technique enables researchers to systematically describe how principals spend their time, and allows for some comparison to managers outside of education.

Whether using Mintzberg-type methodologies, case studies, ethnographic approaches, or some combination, the studies reap remarkably similar results, perhaps best summarized by Peterson's characterization of principals' work as brief, fragmented, and varied. In general, the work life of principals is composed of many short, unplanned verbal interactions in the course of a day. Elementary principals in the Morris study spent 80 percent of their workday in

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1 This paper does not profess to be a comprehensive review of research on principals or on effective schools. The reader is referred to several recent excellent reviews on these topics, including William Greenfield, Research on Public School Principals: A Review and Recommendations, paper prepared for National Institute of Education, June 1, 1982; Caroline Persell, Effective Principals: What Do We Know from Various Educational Literatures, paper prepared for National Institute of Education, June 1982; Gary Yukl, Managerial Leadership and the Effective Principal, paper prepared for NIE, June 1982; and Steven Bossert, "The Instructional Management Role of the Principal," Education Administrative Quarterly (18):34-64.

face-to-face interchanges with staff, faculty, pupils and others, an additional 8 percent of their time in telephone interactions, and 12 percent on desk work. A school day could consist of anywhere from 50 to over 100 separate events, and as many as 400 separate interactions.

The largest difference between Willower and Klemetz's elementary principals and Martin and Willower's secondary principals was that secondary principals spent relatively more of their time (17.3 percent) in scheduled meetings. Morris found that elementary principals spent relatively more time with students (22 percent) than secondary principals (15 percent), although both spent more time with students than with any other group. And while Berman's female high school principals showed a somewhat higher percentage of contacts initiated by others than did their male colleagues, as well as a higher percentage of contacts with supervisors and longer average durations for phone calls, scheduled and unscheduled meetings, the female principals generally had the same overall pattern of task performance.

Pitner (1982) summarizes what we have learned from Mintzberg type studies. Administrative work is characterized by (1) a low degree of self-initiated tasks, (2) many activities of short duration, (3) discontinuity caused by interruptions, (4) the superseding of prior plans by the needs of others in the organization, (5) face-to-face verbal contacts with one other person, (6) variability of tasks, (7) an extensive network of individuals and groups, (8) a hectic and unpredictable flow of work, (9) numerous unimportant decisions and trivial agendas, (10) few attempts at written communication, (11) interactions predominately with subordinates, (12) a preference for problems and information that are specific (rather than general), concrete, solvable, and currently pressing.

While the findings of these descriptive studies will hardly surprise anyone who has ever been a principal, they are useful for several reasons. They may eliminate one source of professional anxiety for individual principals who worry about living up to heroic ideals of leadership, or of a rational and efficient work life. The studies provide a better understanding of the structure of principals' work, enabling us to identify some important tensions between the ideal and the real. For example, if it is true that the nature and pace of events often appear to control principals, rather than the other way around, how, then, do some principals take charge and assume leadership?

These descriptive studies also have implications for training. The preference for verbal communication and concrete information, and the pattern of brief and varied activities, is in stark contrast to the textbooks and teaching style of most graduate education programs.

In an important paper comparing writing about the principalship by principals and by non-principals (professors, consultants, and others), Barth and Deal (1982) found most of the academic literature to be:

1. Theoretical, emphasizing concepts, research, and ideas which draw heavily from the behavioral sciences.
2. Analytical, encouraging principals to rearrange experience into manageable and understandable pieces.
3. Rational, logical and linear, encouraging the use of scientific methodology.
4. Usually impersonal and neutral, emphasizing generalizations over particular idiosyncracies of schools or the peculiarities and sentiments of individual principals.
5. Often critical and judgmental about principals and their schools.
6. Prescriptive.
7. Focused on the instrumental leadership of the principalship, with comprehensive lists defining the role of the principal organized into various functions.
8. Based on an organizational image of schools which emhasizes themes of rationality, certainty, and orderliness.

If this is the material we use to prepare future principals, little wonder, given what we now know of principals' actual work lives, that many are

ill-prepared. Similarly, if these are the assumptions that guide scholars in framing their research questions, it is no surprise that very little of the research has been of value to practicing principals.

The structure and nature of principals' work environment does not encourage principals to write. They are too busy, they are accustomed to verbal communication modes, and their work is too varied and complex to convey with any accuracy. Barth and Deal, in the relatively few samples of writing by principals they were able to find, were struck by the differences in logic, tone, style, and substance between academic and practitioner writing. The characteristics of writing by principals parallel the findings of the decriptive studies of principals' work. In writing about their work, principals:

1. Emphasize concrete, everyday experience.
2. Capture and share experience through examples, stories, and metaphors.
3. Call attention to the limits of rationality regarding life in schools and to the fact that actions often precede knowledge or understanding or even goals or purpose.
4. Describe schools as human, emotional institutions.
5. Show a reluctance to give advice about what others should do in different settings.
6. Characterize leadership more a matter of luck and persistance than of dramatic initiation of bold new ventures.
7. See schools as ambiguous, chaotic, and diverse.

These descriptions of principals' work lives may be useful to improve principals' training and to better prepare them to function within their often fragmented and ambiguous worlds. However, the studies raise two important issues. First, while such patterns are apparently common in much managerial work, are they the most effective work patterns for school leadership? If not, are there changes that can be made in the way educational institutions structure organizational relationships, define role expectations, and design incentive systems to create more effective work patterns for principals?

Second, since both more and less effective principals tend to exhibit similar work activity patterns, we must look beyond the activity patterns to begin to identify those factors that distinguish effective principals. What we find, in general, is that effective principals have learned to be proactive within their work structure, to use their many interactions to acquire useful data, and to analyze and process that data to accomplish their goals.

Effective Principals

One recent study looks specifically at the competencies that distinguish high performing from average performing elementary and secondary principals, using student achievement as the primary criterion of principal effectiveness (Hubb, Lake, Shaalman, 1982). Dividing the competencies into four clusters, researchers found six "basic" competencies common to all principals in the study, and eight "optimal" competencies that seemed to distinguish acceptable performance from excellent performance. The basic competencies included commitment to school mission (purpose and direction cluster); concern for image of school, staff, students; participatory management style; tactical adaptability (consensus management cluster); coaching skills; and firmness in enforcing quality standards (quality enhancement cluster).

Of the eight competencies distinguishing more effective principals, four were in the cognitive skills cluster. More importantly, there were no competencies from this cluster that were common to all principals. Clearly, this is an area where carefully designed training could improve effectiveness. The cognitive optimal competencies identified were monitoring, ability to recognize patterns, perceptual objectivity; analytical ability. The other optimal competencies were sense of control, persuasiveness, commitment to quality, and focused involvement in change.

Role Ambiguity

A number of studies have confirmed the ambiguity of the principal's role. Even the most effective principals, according to the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP 1978) survey, consider ambiguity and conflicting role demands to be a major source of frustration in their jobs. Principals often do not even know why they were selected for their positions (Baltzell and Dentler 1982), so they may be unclear about the kind of leadership behavior expected of them.

Reflecting these ambiguous role expectations, principals' self-evaluations of their performance do not agree with the evaluations of their supervisors or their staffs. Using 15 performance dimensions of principals' work[2] Schmitt, found that the intercorrelations between self-ratings and the ratings of either teachers, support staff, or supervisors, were generally very low, much lower than the intercorrelations between any of the other groups. The lowest correlations were in curriculum progress, directing student behavior, and interpersonal effectiveness.

In other words, principals see their own performance very differently than do their staffs or their supervisors. This difference could reflect the lack of agreement about what principals ought to do and to whom they should be responsive when they encounter multiple and conflicting demands. It also demonstrates the importance for districts to set up feedback mechanisms to give

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2 The dimensions used by Schmitt (1982), in their evaluation of the NASSP Assessment Center, were as follows: curriculum objectives, curriculum progress, supervision of student activities, participation in student behavior, staff evaluation, developmental activities, community relations, interpersonal effectiveness, community relations, coordination with districts, fiscal management, maintenance of school plant, structures communication.

principals accurate data on their own performance and the perception of that performance by others; and role descriptions that provide a clear, common basis for assessing principals' performance.

Yet within this ambiguous context of conflicting demands, effective principals have a vision of their schools and of their role in making that vision a reality. Through information sensing and problem solving skills, they manage the goal setting activities in their schools and generate commitment to those goals. They take the initiative, model appropriate behaviors, and communicate their expectations to students, staff, and community. Their resource allocation and management decisions reflect their vision and their knowledge concerning effective teaching and curricular practices. They use whatever resources they can to create incentives and rewards for appropriate behavior, and consider the instructional implications of their management decisions. They understand the importance of symbolic leadership and of the organizational and institutional setting in which they operate. Though they exhibit a wide range of personal leadership styles, effective principals are likely to have a clear sense of their own strengths and weaknesses, high energy levels, strong communication, analytic, and human relations skills, and a high tolerance for stress.

Goal Settings Behaviors

Effective schools require a sense of purpose and direction provided by well-developed and clearly articulated goals. To be successful in managing the goal setting process and achieving consensus and commitment among staff, the principal first must have a vision of where the school is going, based on values that are publically articulated. The effective principal uses well-developed analytic and intellectual skills to guide staff in the process of

identifying and analyzing problems, and political and managerial skills to resolve conflict and make the planning process work (Manasse 1982).

The importance of this personal vision of the school as a whole is a recurring theme in studies of effective principals. On the basis of case studies of eight effective principals, Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) concluded that the three common elements of effectiveness are vision, initiative, and resourcefulness:

> While they seem to hold fairly idiosyncratic perspectives toward their work world and while these viewpoints appeared to condition their manner and style of behaviors as principals, all eight were also (1) desiring and eager to make their schools over in "their" image, (2) proactive and quick to assume the initiative, and (3) resourceful in being able to structure their roles and the demands on their time in a manner that permitted them to pursue what might be termed their personal objectives as principals (p. 201).

Bossert (1983) studied five principals with vastly differing leadership modes, yet all had some kind of working theory that guided their actions, and all believed that their activities did affect instruction and student learning. Huff (1982) talked about high sense of personal efficacy, commitment to quality, and focus. Johnson (1981) concluded that even in the strongest union districts, teachers supported principals who provided direction, leadership, and high standards.

Whether called vision, goal setting, or theory in action, a clear image of their schools helps effective principals set priorities so that they are not consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of the job. Furthermore, in high-achieving compared to low-achieving schools, principals emphasize instruction as the most important goal of the school. The basis for instructional leadership requires goals that are conceived in terms of student achievement. In schools with high-achieving students, both principals and

teachers hold high expectations, while in low-achieving schools they hold low expectations (Brookover 1979).

The importance of this goal setting function is supported by other research on effective managers. Kotter (1982) found activity patterns of effective general managers to be similar to those of principals, (i.e., much time spent with others, much of the day unplanned). He summarized their two most important challenges as: (1) figuring out what to do despite uncertainty, diversity, and a great deal of information; and (2) getting things done through a large and diverse set of people, over most of whom they had little direct control. Successful general managers spend their first six months in a job gathering information and developing networks. Then, using that information, they establish their agendas and begin to implement them through their networks. Vaill (1982) discusses the importance of "purposing" in high-performing systems. Purposing is "that continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership that has the effect of inducing clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purposes." Leaders of high performing systems put in extraordinary amounts of time, have strong feelings about the attainment of the system's purposes, and focus on key issues and variables.

To review, then, the goal setting behavior of effective principals involves:

(1) A personal vision of their school as they want it to be at some point in the future.

(2) The development of an agenda of actions toward the implementation of that vision.

(3) Management of the goal setting process to generate commitment to the vision on the part of all participants in the school community.

(4) Expert information sensing and analysis skills, used to develop agendas, monitor programs, and provide feedback.

(5) Timely use of conflict management and problem solving, as dictated by the information sensing activities.

Underlying the idea of goal setting is an implicit assumption that leadership implies change. All of the research on effective principals involves moving a school toward a vision of what could be rather than maintaining what is. We do not extol the virtues of great leaders whose prime achievement has been maintaining the status quo. Yet there are multiple pressures on principals to emphasize organizational maintenance activities rather than to risk change. Furthermore, we cannot have principals with well developed personal visions of where their schools ought to go without also accepting a fair measure of building level autonomy. We must allow principals to use their information sensing skills to set appropriate agendas for their particular circumstances.

Research on educational change suggests that effective principals may, in fact, need two types of vision: a vision of their school and of their own role in that school; plus a vision of the change process itself - a framework within which to act on a daily basis and against which to assess effects. Educational policy makers need to understand this link between leadership and change. If they are serious about supporting effective principals, they must be prepared for principals who may be "boat rockers," not satisfied to keep a low profile and maintain the status quo.

Leadership and Initiative

Once they have developed their agendas, effective principals take the initiative in implementing their vision. In spite of the reactive nature of

their work environment, effective principals are proactive in viewing themselves as leaders and believing in their ability to influence situations. They adopt strategies to confront and manage problems rather than avoid them (Blumberg and Greenfield 1980). While some principals may see themselves as having little authority or discretion of their own, caught in the middle between district regulations and constraints and the needs of their students and staffs, several studies have found that the authority of the principal's office depends heavily on the use that principals are able and willing to make of the decision-making opportunities that do exist.

Morris (1981) concluded that principals are largely free to shape their jobs in their own image. Principals use discretionary decision opportunities to maintain their school sites in acceptable equilibrium with the organizational environment, balancing expectations of school improvement and change against expectations of organizational stability and control. They use discretion to achieve an appropriate balance in instructional improvement. They attempt to upgrade staff quality but prevent staff conflict. Similarly, discretion helps them achieve a balance between community involvement and maintaining control over outside influences. Working at the boundary between school and community, principals shape community and parent expectations, channel parent participation into acceptable, nondisruptive avenues of service, and disarm volatile critics.

Perhaps the most interesting use of discretion is "creative insubordination," the wisdom of knowing where and how to disobey, in order to protect the integrity and working rhythm of the local school. Balancing the need to observe bureaucratic chains of command against the need to dilute the dehumanizing effects of impersonal decisionmaking, principals make gentleman's

agreements, plan to be delinquent on deadlines, follow instructions too literally, or deliberately misunderstand orders. Such maneuvers help principals improve their school's competitive position in the distribution of power and resources, and enable them to keep the educational program of their school operating (Morris 1981). However, they also lead us to question policies and procedures that compel effective principals to creative insubordination in order to work in the best interests of their students.

Discretionary decisionmaking requires sound judgment and effective communication and interpersonal skills. Effective principals continually communicate their high expectations to students and staff. Two norms of behavior that have an important impact on school success are collegiability - the notion that the work of teachers is shared work, and continuous improvement - the expectation that teacher improvement in instructional practice is continuous, rather than being exclusive to beginning teachers. Schools with these norms are characterized by continuous staff interaction regarding the practice of teaching, and continuous analysis, evaluation and experimentation with instructional practices (Little 1981).

Little (1981) identified four ways that building principals influence the establishment of these norms in a school. First, they announce clear expectations for all staff to be knowledgeable about effective practices, and to participate in instructional improvement efforts. Second, they model the norms by participating in instructional improvement efforts themselves. Third, they selectively distribute resources to reward teachers who are effective and who continuously try to improve. Finally, they protect teachers who are trying new practices from competing demands on their time and from premature assessments of newly acquired skills.

Effective principals, then, are proactive. They take initiative, assume leadership, expand their own discretion, and communicate their high expectations to staff, students, and community. At the same time, they are also expert in the day-to-day management of the enterprise. We turn next to two aspects of management; the overall management of the resources and environment of the school, and the more specific management practices that directly affect instruction.

Management Behaviors

Effective principals are resourceful managers. They use their discretion to identify and develop resources for their schools and manage these resources to reflect and support their own agendas. Their personal vision guides them in setting priorities so they are not consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of their jobs. For example, in the 1973 NASSP survey of high school principals, the subset of 60 effective principals came much closer to using their time as they thought they should than did the randomly selected principals (Gorton and McIntyre 1978).

Effective principals seem able to satisfy organizational maintenance demands either by using a small portion of their personal time and energy, or by capitalizing on the capability of other personnel (Blumberg and Greenfield 1980. By identifying the strengths and potentials in their staffs, they provide learning opportunities and developmental experiences, while simultaneously accomplishing necessary organizational maintenance functions, developing human resources, and freeing their own time to concentrate on high priority activities.

A number of researchers (Yukl, 1982) (Newberg and Glathorn 1982) suggest the validity of Kerr and Jermier's (1978) substitutes for leadership model. Substitutes for leadership include any characteristics of subordinates, task

or organization that ensure subordinates will clearly understand their roles, know how to do the work, be highly motivated, and be satisfied with the job. These substitutes make leader behavior unnecessary and redundant. By intuitively applying this theory, effective principals may make decisions about where to use their limited resources and personal energy.

Persell (1982) identifies four recurring management features that characterize effective principals - creating order and discipline, marshaling resources, using time well, and evaluating results. Creating order and discipline are aspects of the larger area of school climate. Effective principals take responsibility for creating an orderly, fair, and consistent work environment in their schools (Safe Schools Study 1978). They set standards of high expectations and a tone of respect for teachers and students. Effective principals cultivate good learning conditions by managing the "psychic ambiance" of the school community, setting schedules, managing building maintenance, regulating movement in the building, obtaining instructional materials, and serving as a buffer between teachers and parents. They create a system for administering discipline in the school and serve as a concrete representation of the authority behind the rules and names (Morris 1981).

Instructional Management

There are other management activities that more directly affect actual classroom instruction. Promoting positive instructional outcomes requires school management decisions on a wide variety of school practices to be made on the basis of student learning goals and factors which promote conditions for effective instruction in classrooms. Decision-making, resource allocation, and interaction with staff with regard to issues such as the assignment of students to teachers and classrooms, the scheduling and time allocated to instruction and other activities, staff proposals for experimentation and

innovation, choices regarding staff development activities, observation and evaluation of instructional staff, discipline and behavior policies, etc., will all be based, to the extent possible, on judgments regarding conditions required for effective instruction (Cohen and Manasse 1982). Principals also directly affect instruction in the development of school wide evaluation and feedback systems to monitor and assess pupil progress.

While much of the effective schools research emphasizes the direct instructional role of principals (in classrooms supervising teachers), others (Armor 1976, Bossert 1981) use a more indirect model of instructional management. Bossert identifies the structural characteristics most influential in effective schools as time on task, class size and composition, grouping, curriculum, evaluation, and task characteristics.

Perhaps the most important distinction to make regarding supervision is between stimulating the goals and monitoring the outcomes of the instructional program, and dictating the means by which these goals will be accomplished. Teachers appreciate principals who consistently emphasize educational objectives and who offer support and resources for attaining those objectives. However, doubts exist concerning the effects of closely supervising the techniques of teaching (CEPM, Winter 1982).

Judging from the current research base, there is a growing consensus that the curriculum and instructional program in effective elementary schools is more tightly coupled than in less effective schools (Cohen 1983). This means that school goals, grade level and classroom instructional objectives, instructional content and activities, and measures of pupil performance, are all carefully aligned (Edwards, 1979; Brookover 1978; Wellisch 1978; Levine and Stark, 1983). Students are exposed to a well ordered and focused curriculum,

and the instructional efforts of teachers and other instructional staff are consistent and cumulative.

Symbolic Leadership

Such tight coupling of elementary school instructional programs contrasts with the more general view of schools as loosely coupled systems (Weick 1976, 1982). This approach suggests that schools and school systems differ from traditional models of bureaucratic organizations in lacking at least one of the characteristics of tightly coupled systems. They may lack rules, lack agreement on what the rules are, lack inspection systems to monitor compliance, or lack feedback to improve compliance. In schools, systems of control and communication are less formal and less hierarchical, and the linkages between and among the levels of the organization are much looser.

Much of the goal setting and information sensing behavior of effective principals can be viewed as movement toward tighter coupling in the school organization. Effective principals recognize that, while loose structure facilitates flexibility, novel solutions, and professional autonomy, loosely coupled systems are also more elusive, less tangible, and harder to administer (Weick 1982). In order to tie loosely coupled systems together, effective principals make full use of symbol management.

According to Weick, effective administrators centralize the system on key values and decentralize everything else. They pay close attention to the issues on which people agree, and use rituals, symbols, slogans, and selective centralization to hold the system together. The administrator who manages symbols spends a lot of time one-on-one, constantly reminding people of the central vision, monitoring its application, and teaching people to interpret what they are doing in a common language. This is consistent with both the descriptive studies of principal behavior and with the research on effective

schools. Since individual teachers are pretty much in control of the teaching activities in their own classrooms, it is up to the principal to set goals for the school as a whole, to achieve some consensus among staff about these goals and priorities, to manage the school environment in such a way that teachers and students can do the work necessary to achieve these goals, and to monitor the system and provide feedback on its progress.

Deal and Celotti (1980) confirmed the difficulty of traditional administrative approaches to affecting methods of classroom instruction, and focused, instead, on the use of symbolic leadership to influence what happens in classrooms. They suggest that principals use the "myths" that give schools a special mission or status, provide rituals in which diverse viewpoints can be negotiated into shared outlooks, encourage opportunities for collective fellowship, and capitalize on their informal clout to influence classroom activities by offering advice and support.

Personal Characteristics

Given the organizational complexity of schools, the ambiguity and conflicting expectations of the principal's role, the fragmented and varied nature of the work structure, and the intensity of the demands on principals, what do we know about the personal characteristics of effective principals?

Effective principals tend to have high energy levels, work long hours, be good listeners and observers and skilled information processors, have well-developed expressive and interpersonal skills and high stress tolerance. But Greenfield (1982) concludes that researchers know very little about the backgrounds of principals, their personality orientations and other individual characteristics, or about the relationship between such factors and job performance.

The NASSP Assessment Center evaluates principal candidates in 12 areas: problem analysis, judgment, leadership and organizational ability, decisiveness, sensitivity, range of interests and personal motivation, stress tolerance, educational values, oral and written communications. Schmitt's (1982) validation study of the Assessment Center found that range of interests, personal motivation and stress tolerance were correlated with only one aspect of principals' work, community relations; and the educational values dimension was relevant only for the single task dimension of staff development and evaluation.

Leadership Style

There is no conclusive data on leadership style. All of the studies have found a wide range in personal style among effective principals. Thomas (1978) found directive and facilitative principals to be equally effective in implementing alternative programs, though both styles were more effective than administratively oriented principals. Johnson (1981) found democratic and authoritarian principals equally successful in managing collective bargaining agreements, but laissez-faire principals who gave teachers too much power were criticized. Hargrove (1981) concluded that highly successful principals followed an "authoritative democratic" leadership style, striking a balance between openness and decisiveness.

Hall (1983) found initiators and managers superior to responders as change facilitators. Responders saw their primary role as administrators; they did not articulate future visions of their school, and made decisions in terms of immediate circumstances rather than long-range goals. Initiators, on the other hand, seized the lead, had strong beliefs about what good schools should be like, made decisions in relation to long-term goals. Managers varied between the other two styles; in general, they saw that basic jobs were done

and they effectively implemented central office initiatives, but they rarely initiated movement beyond the basics of what was imposed.

Bossert (1983) used the concept of mode, and found it to be highly personalistic, varied, and closely associated with principal characteristics. Choice of mode is important because it can limit the range of effective behaviors in a given situation. Inconsistent modes and activities can cancel each other (Sergiovanni 1979) and alter subordinates' perceptions of principals' effectiveness (Miskel, 1977). What seems most important is not the particular mode chosen, but the principal's awareness of his or her dominant mode, and understanding of conditions that indicate the use of secondary modes.

Organizational, Institutional, Environmental Contexts

Just as the research is not definitive about the personal characteristics of effective principals, neither are the findings conclusive about the relative impact of different organizational and environmental contexts. Some studies fail even to identify basic demographic or social characteristics of the schools they examined.

Much of the research has focused on elementary principals in schools with students from lower socio-economic groups who are achieving at higher levels than would be expected. We need to question whether some of these findings might be related to the smaller size and clearer understanding of task of elementary (as opposed to secondary) schools, or to the stylistic preferences and behavior patterns of parents, teachers, and students from lower SES groups. There are virtually no studies of similarities and differences among school levels, comparative analyses of large and small schools, or attention to the impact of external school environments on principals (Greenfield 1982).

Lortie (1983) suggests that the role set of principals may differ by SES level. Principals in lower status subsurban elementary schools are preoccupied with discipline issues, and have more problematic relationships with faculty. An effective principal in a lower status setting must be able to deal with discipline and not lose the capacity to be a leader. At the upper SES end, on the other hand, principals must mediate relationships between demanding parents and teachers. Principals in these higher level settings tend to be more open to group activities and participatory decisionmaking. Thus, a major determinant of principal behavior may be the SES level of the school community, rather than other personal or situational variables. We may be calling certain behaviors characteristic of effective principals when they are, in fact, primarily adaptive behaviors for certain settings.

There are other environmental variables that may be important. Various situational leadership theories (Hersey and Blanchard 1977, Yukl 1981, Stewart 1976) suggest that effective leader behavior varies with characteristics such as the nature of the particular task, the level of competence and maturity of the staff, the age, size and structure of the organization. For example, principals of large secondary schools have a more complex management task but also have more human and other resources available to them. Effective behavior for them may involve delegating certain tasks that, in a smaller setting, a principal would do personally. Thus, we must be cautious about setting standards for time spent in classroom evaluations, for example. We cannot make general statements about particular activities or leadership styles that are universally true of effective principals.

It is clear, however, that while the research may have neglected important environmental and contextual variables, effective principals certainly attend

to them. Effective principals understand their boundary - spanning role, both within the school district and in the community at large. They use their position in the district hierarchy to acquire information through informal communication channels and to influence district level decisions. Their awareness of community and district politics enables them to assess which way to tilt the balance of their own schools, and to sense when to bend policy, bypass procedures, or expand their own discretion (Morris 1980). While principals are aware of the constraining influences of their communities, they also realize that the school community can provide resources that are not otherwise available (Bossert 1983).

The institutional context of a school - the district level policies and procedures -- is especially important in terms of resource allocation decisions and incentive and reward systems. For one thing, principals can be more effective if they have some authority over the allocation of resources in their own schools. According to Lortie (1983), principals' prestige with faculties depends to a large extent on their ability to obtain necessary resources. More importantly, principals need local discretion to allocate resources within their own schools in a way that supports and rewards appropriate staff and student behaviors. District policies such as school site budgeting and building level school improvement dollars support principals' by providing resources for them to use as incentives in their own schools. Non-monetary aspects of the institutional setting can also support principals. Teachers look to principals for protection, and in exchange, give principals their loyalty. District policies that enhance principals' overall prestige and credibility also enhance their ability to be influential in their own buildings.

Bossert found that principals reacted positively to federal and state programs, despite complaints about paperwork and qualifications, because participation in such programs translates into increased material and human resources. On the other hand, principals' responses to district level programs (that often come with no dollars attached) ranged from skepticism about the intrusion of the central office into the local business of the school, to volunteering the entire school staff's participation in special programs.

To review, much of the research on effective schools and effective principals has been in urban elementary settings, so we must exercise caution in applying the findings to other settings. Recent work has begun to demonstrate the importance of context, particularly SES level, in understanding the behavior of principals. A principal who is effective in one setting may not be effective in another, depending on community caracteristics and expectations, staff characteristics, etc. Finally district wide incentive and reward systems, resource alllocation decisions, and symbols and rituals, as well as the principal's own skill in boundary-spanning functions, influence prncipal effectiveness.

Implications for Policy

We turn, finally, to the gaps between our growing knowledge of effective principal behavior and the practices now prevalent in many school districts. Despite some weaknesses in the research base, we have a fairly accurate understanding of the structure of principals' work and the nature of schools as organizational systems, and some emerging patterns regarding the behavior of effective principals. How can school districts and state agencies use this research to improve conditions for principal effectiveness? How do we train, select, support, and reward educational leaders with vision, initiative, and resourcefulness; knowledgeable about the technical work of schooling, yet

skillful at managing conflict, handling political situations, and developing human resources? Where do we find principals who can convey their vision to a community, manage goal setting and commitment generation processes, build consensus, and function as boundary spanners across multiple organizational lines? How do we screen out those whose poor human relations skills or lack of creativity make them unlikely candidates for success in the position?

This section will look at four significant areas in which the research has important implications for policies to support effective principals - program implementation, principal selection, training (both pre-service and in-service), and district level organizational and management issues.

Program Implementation

The findings are quite conclusive regarding the key role of principals in effective implementation of any change strategy. Yet when we examine much past school improvement legislation we find curriculum improvement, teacher training, university/school district collaborative projects, but rarely do we see an active role for principals as part of the change strategy. Based on what we now know, we should write principals into any new program legislation, recognizing their importance in the overall priorities and goal setting processes of a school.

However, we should also heed Fullan's (1982) warning that principals who operate mainly as administrators and as ad hoc crisis managers are not effective in helping to bring about changes in their schools. In other words, when new programs are implemented effectively, principals have had an important role. But not all principals are effective change agents. Effective implementation in schools where principals are not effective change agents requires different strategies. The principal must still be reckoned with, but more as a supporting force than as the primary change agent. There is emerging

evidence that visionary leaders may be of two types - those who have a vision of their organization and how it should look, or those who understand organizational processes well enough to provide space and support to the other visionaries in their schools (Manasse 1983). However, a third and more difficult situation is that in which the leader lacks the vision or skills of a change agent, and also lacks any awareness of his or her leadership weaknesses.

New program legislation can be written to provide principals the incentive and the training opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Thus, program implementation can serve as a motivation for principals' own professional development. The skills most important for effective program implementation - decisionmaking, conflict resolution, giving and receiving feedback, time management, oral and written communication, delegating and monitoring authority (Rosenblum and Jastrzab 1980) are the same skills requisite for effective principals in general. But, program implementation strategies also need to consider Fullan's caution that principals cannot become experts in all subject areas, and that, particularly in large schools, principals have great demands on their time. Under these conditions the most effective role for principals may be that of facilitator or coordinator of change, rather than direct leader.

Continued research on the implementation of change leads us to recommend use of a differentiated approach, depending upon the style of the principal. Using the Hall's (1983) definitions of principal style, strategies with initiator principals need to provide adequate information, resources and authority for these principals to use in their own schools. Initiators are unlikely to support program implementation unless they view the change (and

the external resources it brings) as useful in meeting their own goals for their schools.

On the other hand, implementation strategies with respondor principals may require more conscious attention to working around, but not ignoring, the principal. Here, Hall's (1983) discovery of the consigliere's role may be especially important. The consigliere is a second change facilitator who, in addition to the principal, plays an influential role in every change event. The role may be filled by a teacher, an assistant principal, an area or district level specialist, but in every case, the consigliere's role is as active as or more active than the principal's role in change.

Finally, research on change points to the building as the appropriate level for any change effort. As more and more states implement school improvement legislation, they should view these programs as an opportunity to provide the incentive structure and resources at the local school level for the goal setting, commitment generation, planning, and development practices that effective principals use in realizing their vision of their schools.

Selection

Criteria: Baltzell and Dentler (1983), in their recently completed study of the selection of school principals, found "widespread reliance on localistic notions of 'fit' or 'image'" as centrally important in almost all of their randomly selected districts.[3] Districts had deeply held images of "good principals," images that were widely shared by central administrators, parents and principals themselves. Frequently, this fit seemed to rest on personal

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3 Phase 1 of the study describes common practices in principal selection in ten randomly sampled districts. Phase 2 focuses on describing and characterizing promising alternatives to common practice.

perceptions of a certain self-confidence and assertiveness, or an embodiment of community values and methods of operation.

Rarely could top decisionmakers speak with precision of selection criteria, or what educational leadership meant, and even more rarely was any precision specified in writing. Baltzell and Dentler conclude that, in spite of rhetoric to the contrary, educational leadership is generally not a well specified or widely applied criterion for selecting principals. On the one hand, specific educational leadership skills are seldom articulated as part of criterial statements. On the other hand, when professionalism competes with image and fit, the latter seem to be favored unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

Symbolic Value: Although Baltzell and Dentler found the selection process in action to depart profoundly from the idealized model, they also confirmed the importance of the process and the widespread symbolic value placed on it. Principals appear to draw their sense of mission in significant degree from their selection experience. Without clearly articulated criteria and reasons for the final employment decision, principals may wonder exactly why they were appointed, and may subsequently feel undercut in their leadership roles. Many people observe a principal appointment closely, as perhaps the most visible action a superintendent takes. The way the process is structured and implemented communicates the values and operational style of the district. Trust and confidence are enhanced if the process is perceived to be fair, accessible, open and professional. The opposite perception leads to negative reverberations throughout the system.

Baltzell and Dentler's findings, viewed in the context of what we know about effective principals, raise some serious concerns about school district

policies and processes for selecting principals. Effective principals have a vision of their schools, communicate and generate commitment to that vision, and gradually move their schools toward implementing it. If schools and school systems are loosely coupled organizations, agreement on goals and values takes on added importance, yet many school districts neglect this opportunity to make a public and symbolic statement of what they stand for. School districts need to make explicit their criteria for selecting principals. If they are to move toward an instructional component in their definition of principal effectiveness, they need to clearly articulate selection and evaluation criteria that reflect that definition. Further, having articulated what they expect from their principals, districts need to provide feedback to both successful and unsuccessful principal candidates, and to use the same criteria in designing meaningful and congruent performance appraisal systems.

Behavioral Measures: Having articulated expectations regarding principal performance, districts need to develop behavioral measures to use in selecting principals. Phase 2 of the Baltzell and Dentler study looked at three types of innovative selection practices (in five districts) that addressed two needs. One was the need for more information on behavioral or performance measures of candidates; the other was the need to sharpen criterial statements, particularly in the area of educational leadership skills. These innovations were assessment centers, internships, and "exemplary conventional" districts -those districts that use neither an assessment center nor an internship, but were nominated because they "do it well." While these represented three very different selection procedures from a technical viewpoint, the researchers noted several significant similarities among these innovative districts.

These similarities also represented critical differences from the phase 1 districts, critically significant because they appeared to produce divergent results in terms of leadership merit, equity, legitimacy, and efficiency. First, all of the phase 2 districts had substantially sharpened their selection criteria, linking them strongly to merit standards. Second, all of the phase 2 districts devoted considerable time and energy to developing and maintaining a ready pool of tested applicants. The steps leading to applicant status were challenging, carefully prepared, and involved complex standards for establishing eligibility. Third, through a sort of ripple effect, more rigorous selection procedures spread to other administrative positions in the district. Fourth, screening process in these districts were marked by rigor, intensity carefully layered steps and an elaborated scoring and rating systems. Candidates had a great sense of passing through a "weeding out" sequence, with some candidates cut at each screening point. Finally, while superintendents retained final control of principal selection in all districts, in the innovative districts they appeared to rely heavily on the data provided by the process and to share their authority more widely and easily.

As we have learned more about the essential skills of effective principals, it has become increasingly important that selection processes screen out applicants lacking certain skills that research on human learning indicates are particulary difficult to teach - human relations skills, personal resourcefulness, creativity. Current selection procedures rarely incorporate opportunities to actually observe candidates in the kinds of activities essential to effective leadership, nor do school districts generally design professional growth opportunities that give potential principals practice in these essential skills. Too often, for example, assistant principals function

primarily as disciplinarians, getting little practice at instructional supervision, community relations, or school-wide management skills.

Internships represent one approach to developing career ladders that provide appropriate apprenticeship activities and screening opportunities. Internships represent both a training and a selection solution, but the specification of clear developmental career steps leading to the principalship can also occur without a formal internship program. And, in fact, the "exemplary conventional" districts of the Baltzell and Dentler study, even without internships or assessment centers, had publically articulated career ladders.

Assessment centers, originated in private industry, involve trained observers in the behavioral evaluation of aspiring educational administrators as they perform tasks designed to empirically measure their skills. The NASSP Assessment Center evaluates candidates on 12 dimensions: problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, oral communication, written communication, range of interests, personal motivation, educational values.

Over a two-day period, 12 candidates complete various exercises and simulations (i.e., in-basket exercises, leaderless group activities, fact-finding and stress tests), under the constant observation of 6 trained assessors. After the candidates have completed the activities, assessors discuss their performance and assign each candidate a summary score based on the evidence provided by the assessors' reports. Each candidate receives both a written report and a comprehensive private feedback session.

Assessment centers provide behavioral information on candidates' performance of skills that reflect the current state of knowledge on effective principals, generated through extensive task analyses and studies of critical

competencies. They also provide definitive feedback to the candidates themselves; for this reason they have considerable potential as a training/needs assessment instrument, as well. On the other hand, as selection devices they are expensive to design and implement, sometimes are too general in the competencies they assess, and may over-objectify the selection process if they are used exclusively.

Placement: Finally, given the apparent important influence of situational and environmental characteristics on effective leadership behavior, districts need to increase their attention to placing principals in schools which are the best match for their particular strengths and style. The effective behaviors required in some specific environments will be different from those required in others. This placement decision is at least as important as the initial selection decision.

Based on our current knowledge, districts should consider school size, SES level, maturity and competence of the teaching staff, student achievement, the political nature of the school community, and the experience of other administrative team members. Furthermore, districts should exercise caution about moving principals from school to school too frequently. Some districts rotate principals almost as a matter of routine. They may justify such rotations for staff development purposes, saying that principals need new challenges to stimulate professional growth. However, our growing understanding of situational leadership leads us to question the benefit of some moves, either to the school or to the principal.

Other reasons for principal rotation are more political. Superintendents may be reluctant to allow a principal to stay too long in a school and acquire too strong a base of community and staff support. Finally, rotations are sometimes made for the purpose of school development; as the student or

staff population changes or the school matures, a different leader is brought in. However, contrary to popular thinking, there is growing evidence that student achievement initially declines when a new principal is assigned to a school. So districts should make such routine changes with great caution (Rowan 1982).

This discussion of selection has focused on district level policies rather than state certification. However, as we learn more about the competencies of effective principals and develop better behavioral assessment procedures, states should consider revising their certification standards and including behavioral assessments, either initially or following a probationary period. Florida, for example, is currently considering a three-tiered certification system. At the Administrative and Supervision level candidates receive one-year certification to serve as intern, interim, or assistant principals. The School Principal's Certification then would require performance appraisal during the year of intern, interim, or assistant principal assignment. Professional Principal Certification would require three years of service as a school principal, and would involve additional assessments in terms of high-performer competencies, school climate, and student performance. (Lake, 1983)

Training

Study of effective principals has led to a better understanding of the essential knowledge and skills principals need and of the work structure in which they operate. Yet much management training assumes a more rational work setting than exists. Managers' work is characterized by many brief verbal encounters with a variety of people seeking solutions to a multitude of contingencies; yet academic programs require aspiring administrators to spend long hours alone, reading and writing. (Bridges, 1977) Student-teacher relationships fail to provide experience in or useful models of effective conflict

resolution. Administrators typically utilize face-to-face communication and nonverbal cues to accomplish their work, but students are trained in an atmosphere that emphasizes written communication. Finally, graduate programs stress the value of ideas and rationality, but school administrators function in a workplace laden with emotional content (Pitner, 1982).

Pre-service: When we look at the content of pre-service training we see a focus on administrative areas such as finance, law, supervision, and general management theory. Much of the theory is not useful because pre-service students often lack the experience base to apply it, and because many of the administrative issues addressed are more the concern of district level than of building level administrators. On the other hand, pre-service training often fails to address day-to-day operational and management issues as basic as scheduling, for example, that effective principals must master in order to concentrate on larger issues of instructional leadership, motivation, and change. (Cohen and Manasse, 1982)

Pre-service training, then, needs to realistically take into account the nature of the work and work setting of principals, and to attend to the development of day-to-day operational management skills. It also needs to pay increased attention to substantive issues of teaching and learning, adult development and organizational processes. Furthermore, because it is important that effective principals know their own strengths and weaknesses and recognize the limitations of their personal leadership style, pre-service training should provide an understanding of these issues as well as individual feedback on learning styles, leadership modes, information processing, etc.

Finally the structure of pre-service training should allow students to experience first hand the hectic, nonrational world of management, through

some kind of observation/interim/monitoring experience. There are two cautions in designing such training modules. First, they must be comprehensive enough and of sufficient duration that the participants experience, as much as possible, the complexity, pressure, and competing demands of managerial work. Assignment to a single administrative task in a school, observation for an hour or two a day or over only a few days, will not be sufficient. Second, the mentor with whom the student works must be willing and able to interpret his or her actions and their organizational context to the student. As we have seen from the descriptive research, mere observation of activities provides an incomplete picture of principals' work; it is the more subtle analytic skills and symbolic gestures that distinguish effective leaders.

In-service: Currently, in-service training tends to focus on specific instructional areas, curricular or technological innovations, implementation of new legislation, or one-shot activities. But it is at this stage in their development that principals are most likely to benefit from opportunities to think about the totality of their role or to use theory to understand events in their own schools. In-service training programs need to provide increased opportunities for principals to apply relevant theory to their own settings in ways which permit them to generate alternative solutions to both recurrent and unique situations. Furthermore, as principals become more experienced, in-service training programs need to provide increased opportunities for them to learn from and support each other, and to experiment with new behaviors and obtain feedback in a safe environment.

The recent move toward the establishment of principal-run principal centers is one of several possible approaches to meeting principals' in-service needs. These centers provide networking with colleagues, access to training and resources, and a relaxed setting away from the building to allow distance

and perspective in the pursuit of vision. Principal academies and developmental training programs are other approaches to holistic, systematic in-service programs that provide a framework for comprehensive personal and professional growth.

Finally, both pre-service and in-service programs need to provide more training in the way of process and organizational skills, without which principals are unable to apply technical knowledge, as well as political skills to facilitate boundary-spanning functions. And based on the research which identifies the cognitive skills of high performers, training programs should include developmental activities in data collection, perceptual objectivity, and the use of theory to structure and interpret concrete experience. Principals need the opportunity to perceive their own and others' biases, to recognize patterns, to make comparisons, and to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of options.

District Organizational and Management Issues

Throughout this paper we have focused on effective principal behavior within the context of the organizational environment, and based on a realistic understanding of the structure of managerial work. At several points we have already discussed some of the organizational implications for supporting effective principal behaviors. To conclude this paper, then, we review district level organizational and management policies which can improve conditions for principal effectiveness.

District Goals: Remembering the ambiguity of the principal's role, we have already talked about the need for superintendents and central office leadership to clearly articulate district level goals and expectations, both to the staff and to the public. Further, if districts are serious about academic achievement, these articulated goals need to emphasize the importance

of instructional achievement, and expectations for principal performance must emphasize instructional management.

Building Autonomy: On the one hand, we have talked about the importance of district wide goals, and on the other we have implied throughout this paper that a certain degree of building-level autonomy is essential for principals to function as effective leaders. We have suggested that school improvement efforts are most likely to succeed if they are designed and implemented at the building level, with the support of the principal. We have talked about the importance of allowing principals some discretion in the distribution of resources (both monetary and value symbolic) in their own schools, and the value of this resource provides role in creating staff loyalty. How do we reconcile the call for district-wide goals with that of building level autonomy?

First, to return to Weick, administering loosely-coupled systems involves centralizing the system on key values, and decentralizing on everything else.

Clear statements of district goals help principals structure their own priorities. Principals who have been selected on the basis of such articulated values are more likely, first, to buy into them, and second, to feel empowered by their selection. This confidence derived from system - centralized values supports assertive leadership behavior. But effective principals need local autonomy to analyze the resources, needs, and expectations of their own school community, and to operationalize these system-wide values appropriately. Local discretion in the distribution of tangible and intangible resources in their own schools provides principals a potent source of power to motivate the many small events that cumulatively lead to change.

Evaluation and Feedback: Having articulated district-wide goals, districts need to develop congruent systems for evaluating principals, based on clearly articulated criteria and processes upon which principals and their

supervisors agree. Performance of the instructional management role, and measures of instructional effectiveness need to play an increased role in this evaluation in process. Some districts are developing productivity standards or school climate to further their instructional goals. Such feedback systems can be another symbolic statement of district values. They can also become models for the installation of similar feedback systems at the school level.

An example of a comprehensive feedback system is Richland County (So. Carolina) School District One's Principal Evaluation Process. Each summer, each principal meets with the superintendent, deputy superintendent, and appropriate associate superintendent to assess the principal's performance in the five specified areas of instructional management, communication, management of personnel and student services, fiscal management, and physical plant management. Data examined at the conference includes observation reports from the associate superintendent, the principal's own needs assessment, the annual custodial and maintenance inspection, the school climate needs assessment (based on a biannual survey and site visit by a district team), and the results of the Productivity Program. The Productivity Program is an incentive system that awards cash grants to schools that meet criteria on at least four of six productivity indicators: improved reading performance, improved math performance, positive parent attitudes toward school (determined by a survey), high attendance of the school staff, high attendance of students, and positive student attitudes toward school (again, by survey).

The Richland County One Principal Evaluation Process thus provides a wide range of quantitative and qualitative feedback data to principals on a regular basis, and also creates a structure to integrate and utilize the data to set goals and standards. The next steps are to train principals to use the

information for action planning, and to provide support and resources to implement their plans.

Reward and Incentive Systems

Richland County School District One's Productivity Plan represents one kind of district incentive system. Using both cash awards and public recognition, based on explicit criteria and measurable standards, it reflects district wide goals, and expectations of instructional leadership. As an incentive for principals, it is consistent with findings that principals' primary satisfactions and psychic rewards come from feeling the have contributed to student achievement (Lortie 1983). Thus, school based incentives may be as powerful as personal recognition. Other incentives may include participation in training and network activities, extra personnel, or other resources for their school, influence in district decisions regarding personnel, curriculum and resource allocation. Districts need to examine their formal and informal reward systems, paying particular attention to who gets promoted, on what basis resources are allocated, and who gets recognition and visability. Districts whose incentive systems reflect instructional goals improve conditions for instructional leadership. Without clear incentives for considering the instructional implications of what are typically viewed as largely administrative and management decisions, it is unlikely that principals or their staffs will be willing to pay the higher decision costs.

It is important that district policies reflect on understanding of the change process and allow adequate time for change. Some researchers suggest three years as the minimum for a change sequence to occur. Premature evaluation might be counter-productive, particularly in light of the negative effects on a school of a change in principal.

Finally, districts need to eliminate competing and contradictory policies, or policies and practices that violate their own professed goals. If district procedures are congruent with objectives of student learning and development, principals should rarely feel the need for "creative insubordination."

Conclusion

Having reviewed the research on effective schools and effective principals, we have identified a number of policy areas through which local and state education units can act to support effective principal behaviors. In general, the policy implications of the research involve recognizing the importance of principals in implementing any kind of school improvement; redesigning training programs to prepare principals for the fragmented, varied and ambiguous nature of their work lives; teaching them the necessary analytic, organizational, communication and pedagogical skills to function effectively as instructional leaders; developing behavioral approaches to principal selection and certification that are based on clearly articulated and validated criteria; providing on-going feedback and performance appraisal systems based on specified criteria and agreed upon goals; and, finally, developing district incentive and reward systems that are congruent with district articulated goals, and that provide principals with the resources and support they need to be effective educational leaders.

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